TRANSITION PLANNING

FOR YOUTH WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

A COMMUNITY SUPPORT GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION

Overview and Purpose of the Community Support Guide

The *Transition Planning for Youth with Special Needs: A Community Support Guide* was developed to provide community partners (school personnel, social workers, and community members) with useful information and practical tips for supporting successful transition planning for youth with special needs.

For the purpose of this guide, a ***youth with special needs*** is considered to be a young person who requires specialized supports to improve health and to participate in daily activities at home, at school and in the community because of significant impairments in one or more of the following areas:

- health
- cognition
- communication
- sensory-motor skills
- social integration
- emotional/behavioural skills
- self-help skills

Although this guide is intended for community partners, it is also accessible to youth with special needs and their families who wish to increase their understanding of the best practices associated with transition planning.

The Community Support Guide is designed to complement the British Columbia Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) *Your Future Now: A Transition Planning & Resource Guide for Youth with Special Needs and their Families. Your Future Now* provides a Transition Planning Workbook to assist youth, their families and the transition planning team with the various steps needed to complete a successful Transition Plan. A Resource Guide, included in the back of *Your Future Now,* provides more information on housing, funding supports and recreation. Another useful resource is the B.C. Ministry of Education's *Career/Life Transitions for Students with Diverse Needs: A Resource Guide for Schools* (2001).

Objectives of the Guide

This guide was designed to address the following objectives:

1. Provide information to school personnel, social workers and community members, including youth and adult service agencies, on the best practices and key factors that support successful person-centered transition planning for youth with special needs.

2. Provide practical tips for supporting the active participation of youth with special needs and their families in the transition planning process.

3. Provide information on supporting a collaborative approach to transition planning.

Development of the Guide

The information in this guide incorporates best practices research and material from a number of sources, including input from parents, a reference group comprised of Ministry of Children and Family (MCFD) staff and community members, and the Inter-ministry Committee on Transition Planning for Youth with Special Needs. For a complete list of those consulted, please refer to the acknowledgements on page 36.

The two primary sources that informed the best practices component of this guide are *Life Beyond the Classroom: Transition Strategies for Young People with Disabilities* (Wehman, 2001), and the *Transition Guide for Washington State* (The Center for Change in Transition Services, University of Washington, 2000).

TRANSITION PLANNING AND PERSON-CENTERED PLANNING

What is Transition Planning?

Transitioning to adulthood is a challenge for many young people. A youth with special needs and his or her family must make some important decisions about the future. Such decisions include making choices around future living arrangements, education and employment, finances, and community and social involvement. These are often complex issues that benefit from proper planning.

Transition planning is a partnership involving the individual with special needs, their family, local service providers, school personnel and government staff who support youth transitioning to adulthood. Transition planning is an interactive, dynamic process that requires a number of meetings to prepare, plan and implement a successful transition for a youth with special needs.

The purpose of transition planning for youth with special needs is to identify opportunities and experiences during their school years that will help them better prepare for life as an adult (Johnson, et al., 2000). Transition planning can assist the youth in securing employment, pursuing post-secondary education and experiencing a meaningful community life.

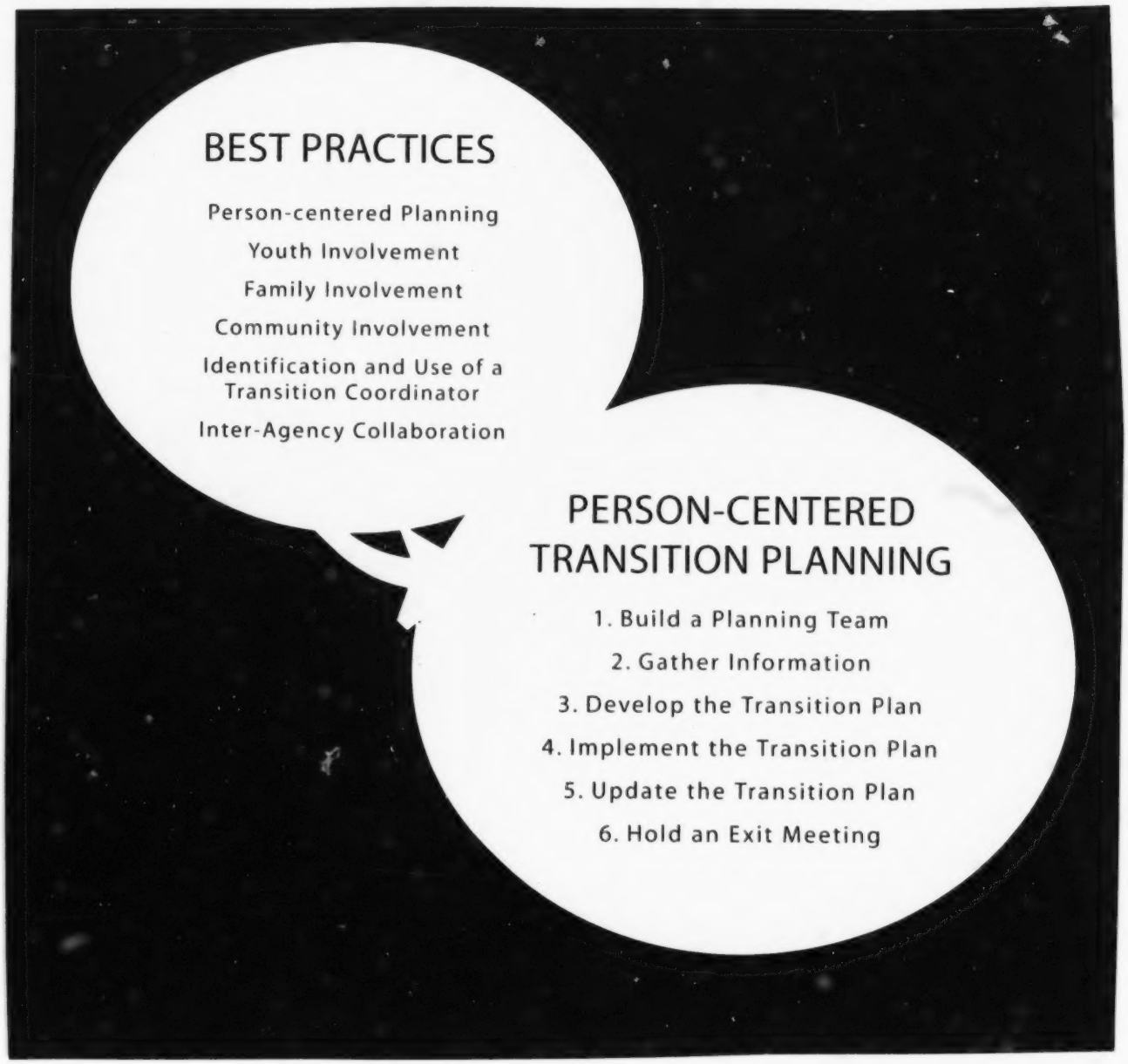
Why is Transition Planning Important?

Transition planning is essential as it provides an opportunity to review personal accomplishments and create an individualized vision for the future. This in turn prepares the youth for new and exciting challenges and opportunities.

It is critical that the transition planning process begins as early as possible – in some cases the youth may be as young as 14 years of age. Starting early allows time to adequately prepare and implement a Transition Plan that will address the challenges of preparing for adulthood.

TRANSITION PLANNING MODEL FOR YOUTH WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The Transition Planning Model for Youth with Special Needs identifies the best practices that support the six steps of a person-centered approach to transition planning.



TRANSITION PLANNING BEST PRACTICES

Person-centered Planning

Key to the transition planning process is an approach known as person-centered planning. Person-centered planning (Mount, 1992), is a concept that places the individual with special needs in a leadership role during the transition planning and service delivery process. It is also consistent with the principles of self-determination and individual involvement as the youth makes choices around planning for his or her future. This approach to transition planning has been shown to enhance individualized service planning and outcomes for the individual (Malette et al, 1992). The ultimate goal of a person-centered planning approach is to create supports and opportunities that enable a person with special needs to experience a self-directed life.

There are a number of tools and strategies associated with person-centered approaches. Everson & Reid (1999), in *Person-centered Planning and Outcome Management: Maximizing Organizational Effectiveness in Supporting Quality Lifestyles Among People With Disabilities*, offer some guidelines for developing person-centered Transition Plans.

Youth Involvement

Involving the youth is fundamental to the planning process, and is considered a best practice. When a young person is involved with the process and has choices around his or her future, that individual's service planning and outcomes are enhanced. Person-centered planning supports the best practice of youth involvement, as it places them in a respected and leadership position during the planning and service delivery process. It is critical that the youth 'drives' the transition planning process to ensure the Transition Plan reflects who they are, and what they want to achieve.

A transition planning team encourages, facilitates and supports the active participation of the youth, and their family and friends in the planning process. Through active participation, a young person is further encouraged to be 'in the driver's seat,' thus providing an opportunity for the youth to learn self-determination skills – the ability to determine one's fate or course of action (Johnson et al., 2000). For further information on supporting the development of self-determination skills, refer to *Appendix 1 – Helping Youth Develop Self-Determination Skills* (see page 22).

Active participation also ensures that the planning goals and strategies are based on the aspirations, desires and needs of the individual and his or her family – not merely on the services and placements that are available. Some of the ways a young person may participate in transition planning are listed in *Appendix 2 – Roles and Responsibilities of the Transition Planning Team* (see page 23).

In British Columbia, the school system supports youth involvement in future life planning. School graduation requirements include the successful completion of the *Grade 10 Planning* course and a *Graduation Portfolio.*[1] These graduation requirements enable students to plan for their future education and career goals, while introducing financial planning and informed decision-making around health and other issues. In addition, *Individualized Education Plans* (IEPs) are required for all students with special needs, and in many cases IEPs can be used as Transition Plans. IEPs are key in matching a student's educational programs and experiences to their post-school goals. Students can use their IEP and Graduation Portfolio to plan for the transition to adult life.

[1] *Graduation Portfolios* focus on the areas of education and career planning, employability skills, personal health, community involvement and responsibility, information technology, and art and design. For further information on *The Graduation Program* go to B.C. Ministry of Education Graduation web site at www.bced.gov.bc.ca/graduation/planning10.htm or call the Content and Achievement Unit, Ministry of Education, (250) 356-2523.

Family Involvement

Research shows that parental involvement increases success in transition planning (Rutherford & Turnbull, 1996). In many cases, parents and members of an extended family are the only consistent relationships a youth has through his or her life. Family involvement in identifying the young person's strengths, creating a plan for the future, and advocating on his or her behalf is critical.

The extent and nature of involvement will vary depending on the capacity of the family, their unique abilities and availability. Parents bring to the process a fundamental understanding of their son or daughter, insight into what their child may want to accomplish, and experience navigating service systems on behalf of their child. Perhaps most importantly, parents can also share their child's dream and help them realize their vision.

In the case of youth in the care of the Ministry of Children and Family Development foster parents, social workers or guardians, and extended family may also be involved in transition planning.

Some of the ways parents or guardians may be involved in the transition planning process are listed in *Appendix 2 – Roles and Responsibilities of the Transition Planning Team* (see page 23).

Community Involvement

Involving community members in the transition planning process works toward building crucial service and support networks for the youth and his or her family. Community involvement facilitates a smooth transition for a youth with special needs from school to adulthood.

Key community participants include educators, social workers, current and future service providers, and representatives from community colleges, vocational rehabilitation programs[2] and community businesses. In the case of aboriginal youth, their band and/or aboriginal community agency may also be involved. These community resources can help the young person fulfill their vision by identifying the need for new resources, or by bringing about required changes to existing systems so that the youth's needs are met.

However, successful transition planning moves beyond the notion of involving only service providers, to include those in the business and post-secondary education communities. Involving these community members serves to establish community connections and creates vocational and volunteer opportunities for the youth.

[2] *Vocational rehabilitation programs include those made available through the Ministry of Human Resources, Employment Programs for Persons with Disabilities.*

Identification and Use of a Transition Coordinator

The transition coordinator plays a key role within the transition planning team. The identification and use of a transition coordinator is viewed as a best practice. This role can be assumed by a variety of individuals including the youth transitioning to adulthood, the parent or guardian, another family member or a school-based employee. If the plan is not school-based, the youth and his or her family may choose a transition coordinator from the planning team. If the youth is attending school, a school-based employee typically assumes the role of the coordinator of the IEP/Transition Plan.

Parents or guardians have the opportunity to be active participants in the process along with the youth and are all considered to be important partners in the development of IEPs/Transition Plans. They should feel welcome and encouraged to contribute throughout the process. As a rule, the student should be included in all phases of the process.

Students and families may have an opportunity to conduct parallel transition planning processes by using planning tools such as PATH and MAPS. For more information on the planning tools PATH and MAPS, see page 18 of this guide. Both MAPS and PATH can be accessed online at www.inclusion.com.

As well, the document *Your Future Now* provides worksheets that may assist the youth and his or her family as they work through the IEP/Transition Plan process. *Your Future Now* is available online at www.gov.bc.ca/mcf.

The transition coordinator provides organizational and administrative support for the team. The coordinator's duties are listed in *Appendix 2 – Roles and Responsibilities of the Transition Planning Team* (see page 23).

The term transition coordinator is also used to identify an individual who is working at a 'systems level' to improve efficiency and effectiveness in the transition planning process within a particular community or district, including the development and use of common transition planning tools. This person also helps to formalize relationships among the various agencies and transition planning partners, and establishes consistency with the transition planning process within a specific region.

Interagency Collaboration

The creation and implementation of a successful Transition Plan depends on interagency planning and collaboration. Collaborative arrangements involving community agencies and service providers support youth transitions by developing common processes within the local area.

Working together, these agencies can utilize tools, mechanisms and structures to facilitate seamless service. These tools may include formal interagency agreements such as memorandums of understanding, protocols, and joint planning agreements. Establishing structures, such as networks, committees and task forces, may also promote successful collaboration. Community involvement works toward creating a cooperative environment, thereby increasing employment and academic options for youth with special needs and the opportunity to live as independent adults.

STRATEGIES FOR PERSON-CENTERED TRANSITION PLANNING

Person-centered planning, an important best practice, places the individual with special needs in a respected leadership role during the transition planning and service delivery process. Team members can support the youth in person-centered planning by using the following strategies.

Begin Planning Early

Transition planning for adulthood can begin as early as 14 years of age and continue past 19 years of age.

Develop an Individualized and Future-oriented Plan

Fundamental to person-centered approaches is the development of services and supports that are responsive to each individual's unique needs and dreams. The foundation of individualized transition planning is to consistently maintain the individual and their family at the center of the planning process.

Focus on Strengths and Abilities

Person-centered approaches focus on strengths and abilities rather than disabilities. Professional assessments of the individual should also adopt this approach.

Foster Effective Communication and Collaboration

Successful transition planning requires effective communication and collaboration between youth, parents, educators, service providers and other team members.

Provide Responsive Services

Person-centered approaches are based on assisting the individual to achieve their personal goals and aspirations, and as a result often challenge agencies and professionals to re-evaluate and change existing programs, services, practices and policies.

Utilize Existing Community Supports

While an individual may require specialized programs and services, a person-centered approach encourages planning teams to also explore existing resources. Neighbours, co-workers, friends, the youth's cultural community can support the youth in his or her transition. Generic community services, such as local recreation centers or public transportation, can be incorporated into the youth's Transition Plan along with culture-specific community services.

SUPPORTING THE YOUTH'S TRANSITION PLANNING PROCESS

Supporting Youth and Family Involvement

The following strategies support youth and family involvement in transition planning and empower them throughout this challenging process:

- Ensure that youth and parents have the opportunity to express themselves in their choice of language.
- Inform the youth and the parents of the purpose and the components of a successful transition planning process.
- Encourage and support youth and parent involvement in the design and implementation of the Transition Plan.
- Encourage and support youth and parents in chairing and/or facilitating transition planning meetings.
- Encourage youth to use a checklist to help them plan for the process based on their age, and to record and monitor their transition planning goals and successes.[3 and 4]
- Provide reader-friendly, useful information, including web-based information, booklets and family guides, transition fairs, and information evenings, to assist families and young people in making informed choices and decisions.
- Modify the traditional, formal 'report and meet' planning and review meetings so they are more welcoming of youth and family participation.
- Inform youth and their parents of the programs and services that are available in their community, and of the responsibilities and mandates of the local community agencies.
- Ensure that youth and parents have access to cultural supports and settings that they indicate will help with the planning process.
- Offer suggestions to youth and parents on activities they can do at home to promote the skill development and self-confidence of the young person transitioning to adulthood.
- Ensure youth and parents have supports, including peer support provided by other experienced youth and families.
- Provide interpretive or other communication assistance for individuals requiring such support.

[3] The B.C. Ministry of Education has developed Student Transition Diaries and Student Career/Life Transition Planning Checklists, tools for students to use (i.e., planning for and recording and monitoring a transition) – B.C. Ministry of Education (2001). *Career/Life Transitions for Students with Diverse Needs: A Resource Guide for Schools*, www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/docs/moe_clt_resource_rb0144.pdf

[4] The B.C. Ministry of Children and Family Development has developed a workbook and checklist to assist youth with special needs in career/life transition planning – B.C. MCFD (2005). *Your Future Now: A transition planning & resource guide for youth with special needs and their families.*

Supporting Effective Teamwork

Creating 'joint' or 'integrated' transition teams supports effective teamwork and successful transition planning. These teams focus on the needs of the individual and commit to working in a coordinated and collaborative manner to meet these needs.

The following strategies facilitate this approach:

- Establish collaborative relationships among team members.
- View relationships as resources.
- Create a common frame of reference so disagreements are resolved to reflect common values and focus on what is important to the youth.
- Adopt joint problem solving techniques.
- Develop and use joint or integrated assessments that identify strengths and abilities so that the assessment process is consistent with the person-centered planning approach.

Supporting Interagency Collaboration

Developing organizational structures, tools and mechanisms that support interagency planning and collaboration is a best practice. For example, the creation of local transition steering groups or committees can serve as an organizational structure that supports successful transition planning for youth in a local community.

These groups:

- Promote the development of local transition teams.
- Provide leadership for the development of local transition policies and practices.
- Coordinate and organize the various community agencies and partners involved in the community (Pianta & Kraft-Sayre, 2003).
- Work together to bring forward collective issues of concern, such as gaps in service, to the ministries involved.

These types of committees or working groups bring together key stakeholders to:

- Develop local transition planning policy and protocols that support coordination.
- Facilitate community partnerships.
- Bring about changes to the 'system' in order to create new opportunities for young people transitioning into adult services.

Tools that support collaborative working arrangements between various agencies include the use of formal local interagency agreements, such as protocols and memorandums of understanding. Joint processes, practice guidelines, and common templates for recording transition plans also support collaboration.

Such tools ensure commitment to:

- Effective communication and information exchange.
- Effective service planning and implementation.
- Cost sharing (Wehman, 2001).

Supporting an Inter-ministry Approach

At the ministry level, inter-ministry policies and protocols can support successful transition planning. Policies and protocols that clearly articulate the roles and responsibilities of the various ministries involved during the youth's transition phase to adult life also support a collaborative approach at the program management level.

Policies and protocols may help with the:

- Coordination of services.
- Reduction in the duplication of efforts and services.
- Development of a unified, consistent approach to transition planning for youth with special needs.

SIX STEPS TO PERSON-CENTERED TRANSITION PLANNING

1 STEP 1: Build a Planning Team

A transition planning team develops goals, identifies problems, creates solutions and establishes links between agencies and community resources. In order to do this effectively the right composition of team members is required.

The youth and his or her family are responsibile to choose the members of the transition planning team. The team may include people from the youth's personal support network, such as peers, friends, classmates and extended family who provide informal support. One person from the team should be identified as the transition coordinator and will assist the youth and his or her family in moving the Transition Plan forward. For more detailed information on the role of a transition coordinator, please refer to the *Identification and Use of a Transition Coordinator* section of this document on page 10.

It is suggested that the planning team consist of a minimum of two members to a maximum of eight members. Too large of a group may be overwhelming for some youth and their parents and may be less effective than a smaller group consisting of key individuals. The significant people who become part of the transition planning team may include:

- the young person
- parent(s) / guardian(s)
- school personnel
- social workers
- service agencies for adults
- current service providers
- community members
- members of the youth's informal network

Answers to the following questions help to determine the appropriate members for the planning team and the roles they may assume (Wehman, 2001):

- Who knows the young person the best?
- Who does the person trust and feel comfortable around?
- Who does the youth look to for advice and support?
- Who would the youth like to help him or her with their transition from school to adulthood?
- How can these people best help?

Assigning roles and responsibilities is a central part of forming a team. The recommended roles and responsibilities of school based transition planning team members are described in *Appendix 2 – Roles and Responsibilities of the Transition Planning Team* (see page 23).

2 STEP 2: Gather Information

Step two of the person-centered planning process facilitates 'getting to know' the young person. Input from team members, particularly the youth and the family, is critical to gathering valuable information and coming to understand the youth's dreams, aspirations and needs. MAPS (Making Action Plans) and PATH (Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope)[5], two important planning tools, assist in identifying the unique preferences, experiences, skills and support needs of the young person and his or her goals.

The MAPS planning process begins with a story - the youth's history. By writing their history, the young person has a chance to define his or her dreams, acknowledge issues, and develop a profile of his or her gifts and talents. PATH, on the other hand, starts in the future and works backward to the present, identifying the progression of steps necessary to make the youth's dream come true. To identify possible MAPS and PATH facilitators in your community, contact the Family Support Institute and/or the British Columbia Association for Community Living at (604) 875-1119.

Planning tools, such as MAPS and PATH, help build the youth's self-determination skills and behaviours. Another resource, *Your Future Now*, provides worksheets to facilitate information gathering and tracking progress. These mapping processes also provide the transition planning team with a strong sense of the youth's desired future. For further information on the common elements of the 'mapping process' and the type of information to be gathered for a successful person-centered transition planning process, refer to *Appendix 3 – Getting to Know the Youth: Gathering Information* (see page 26).

There are a variety of formats for gathering this type of information, however, it is important that the final 'map' provides detailed information about the individual's preferences, goals, hopes, skills, community and cultural connections, launguage skills, communication style, and health/medical and functional information. Additional information can come from other assessments that are completed to prepare and assist with transition planning, such as neuropsychological or physical therapy assessments.

[5] **MAPS** and **PATH**, two valuable planning tools, can be accessed at *www.inclusion.com*.

3 STEP 3: Develop the Transition Plan

Developing the Transition Plan is a creative, dynamic, interactive process. First, the team considers the youth's goals and the available services and supports in the following areas:

- health (medical needs and healthy lifestyle)
- daily living (self-care, shopping, meal preparation, etc.)
- housing / living arrangements
- finances and money management
- friendship and socialization
- transportation
- post-secondary education and training
- employment
- recreation
- community involvement (spirituality and volunteerism)
- cultural associations
- legal and advocacy needs

For each of these areas, the team should consider the following five questions (Wehman, 2001):

1. What are the youth's goals?
2. What skills or behaviours does the youth need to learn to reach his or her goals?
3. What local programs, services and supports are available to support these goals?
4. What responsibilities must the youth, the school, adult services, cultural and community agencies, and the youth's family assume in order for the youth to reach his or her goals?
5. What are the gaps or barriers within current programs, services and supports that must be addressed?

Second, the team must identify the necessary tasks or steps that need to be accomplished to support the youth's goals. In order for the Transition Plan to succeed the team must identify who is responsible for completing each task and when the tasks are to be completed. The young person's vision or dream map can serve as a checkpoint to make sure the activities assumed by the team are in line with, and support the stated goals. To ensure the plan is consistent with the youth's vision, the transition planning team can answer the following question (Evan & Reid, 1999): Will the articulated goals move the youth toward his or her desired dreams?

If the answer is no, or if there is uncertainty, the team should discuss and possibly re-consider the identified activities/steps and review, with the youth, his or her stated goals.

The Transition Plan can also list the services and supports currently accessed, and any existing service/support gaps. The plan should then address these gaps and list the services and supports that must be in place to ensure a successful transition to adulthood.

Transition planning teams may develop their own user-friendly format to record information, to list and monitor action items and other strategies, and to keep the Transition Plan on track. To see sample transition plans and a transition plan template refer to *Appendix 4 – Sample Transition Plans* (see page 27). The youth and his or her transition team may use these sample plans as a guide when developing a Transition Plan.

4 STEP 4: Implement the Transition Plan

Putting the Transition Plan into action includes assigning very specific, detailed responsibilities and timelines. Who will do what, when and how must be decided by the team. Effective communication and accountability must be established to ensure that the tasks/actions are carried out on time. The youth, transition coordinator or a parent may choose to take on the responsibility of ensuring that team members follow through with the stated tasks/actions recorded in the Transition Plan.

5 STEP 5: Update the Transition Plan

The transition coordinator schedules follow-up meetings and updates the plan as needed. The youth or family member may initiate the process by identifying a need to review the plan.

6 STEP 6: Hold an Exit Meeting

The transition coordinator organizes this final planning session. At this stage of the process, the student is nearing the end of high school. Here, the Transition Plan is finalized, tasks and objectives achieved by the group to date are identified, and any transition planning goals or objectives that have not been accomplished are addressed.

CONCLUSION: SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION PLANNING

The intent of this guide is to provide information on transition planning best practices and practical strategies to support a person-centered planning approach. Successful transition planning enhances the youth's competencies and assists him or her in achieving greater self-sufficiency, confidence, employment and social responsibility. Adopting transition planning best practices and a person-centered planning approach will help make the youth's transition to adulthood a success.

APPENDIX 1

HELPING YOUTH DEVELOP SELF-DETERMINATION SKILLS

- Encourage the young person to organize and plan for upcoming class assignments and events in school.
- Assist the youth in articulating the necessary adaptations or accommodations they require to actively participate in their school and other community settings.
- Encourage the youth to direct his or her personal care.
- Encourage the youth to ask appropriate questions of aides/attendants, caregivers and health care providers.
- Encourage the youth to assume responsibility for his or her own health care, including medication management, scheduling of appointments and knowledge of his or her health conditions.
- Encourage the youth to set up meetings associated with his or her transition to adult life, including meetings with college/university personnel, his or her Community Living Service (CLS)[6] social worker, or other community service agencies.
- Support the young person in the process of obtaining employment, including preparing resumes, completing job applications and preparing for interviews.
- Encourage him or her to actively participate in their IEP and/or other transition planning opportunities.
- Assist the youth in understanding the future implications of their disability as it relates to their future desires and help them set attainable goals.
- Teach, demonstrate, and practice assertiveness skills.
- Discuss human rights and disability rights and issues, and how best to advocate for themselves.
- Listen to and support the individual as he or she shares feelings, concerns, opinions and needs.

[6]At the time of printing this guide, the transfer of authority for delivering Community Living Services to a new organization, Community Living British Columbia (CLBC), was in progress. Consequently, the title and role of the CLS social worker may change. Please see the Ministry of Children and Family Development website (www.gov.bc.ca/mcf) for updates on the transition of services to CLBC.

Appendix 1 is adapted from Johnson et al., (2000), Transition Guide for Washington State and Shriner's Hospitals for Children – Northern California (n.d.), *It's Your Future – Go For it! A Transition Guide for Teens and Parents.*

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TRANSITION PLANNING TEAM

Youth

- Attend IEP/transition planning meetings.
- Lead the transition planning meetings, with support as required.
- Share his or her personal preferences, interests, skills, goals, and needs with the team (with support, as needed).
- Ask questions and provide information to the team on various issues that he or she wants to address, such as wellness, medical, social, sexual, financial or guardianship issues (with support, as needed).
- Assume responsibility for working towards his or her goals and completing the tasks listed in the Transition Plan.

Parents or Guardians

- Attend IEP/transition planning meetings.
- Prepare their son/daughter for participation in the process.
- Lead transition planning meetings where possible and desired.
- Provide valuable insight into the background and values of their family.
- Share their son/daughter's and their own preferences, interests, skills, goals, and needs.
- Focus the team's planning on the youth's and family's needs and goals.
- Provide their son/daughter with opportunities to learn and practice the foundation skills, such as problem-solving skills, assertiveness, self-advocacy, and stress management skills, that support active participation in the transition planning process.
- Provide information on the programs and support services that are accessed by and available to their son/daughter.

Transition Coordinator

- Coordinate and schedule meetings.
- Manage the paper work and maintain a transition file that contains assessments, the IEP/Transition Plan and related materials.
- Keep the planning session focused.
- Resolve conflicts.
- Monitor the progress of the IEP/Transition Plan.
- Obtain commitment for follow-up action and ensure that all participants are clear on the specific tasks/actions they are to undertake.
- Coordinate the writing and implementation of the IEP/Transition Plan.

Special Educators

- Attend IEP/transition planning meetings.
- Listen to the youth's vision and identify his or her needs.
- Ensure that referrals are made to the appropriate community service agencies.
- Ensure that the youth's and family's needs and goals are articulated, understood and used to drive transition planning.

General Educators

- Attend IEP/transition planning meetings.
- Consult with the planning team on education opportunities, graduation requirements and assessments, and on the youth's progress and support needs.
- Help identify and analyze post-secondary education opportunities.
- Provide instruction to the young person on the knowledge and skills required to support a successful transition to adulthood.
- Support an inclusive environment for the youth with special needs.

Vocational Specialists

- Attend IEP/transition planning meetings for students who require vocational training or placement.
- Help identify and analyze relevant pre-employment and vocational training programs.

Social Workers, Service Providers and Other Community Members

- Attend and contribute to IEP/transition planning meetings.
- Provide support services in community settings.
- Provide the youth with cultural support and connection where possible.

Other Family Members, Friends and Advocates

- Attend IEP/planning meetings as appropriate.
- Share information on the youth's and family's preferences, interests, goals and needs.
- Assist and support the youth and his or her family as they discuss their needs and goals.
- Focus the team's planning on the youth's and family's needs and goals.
- Provide informal home and community experiences and supports, if possible.

Adapted from Wehman, (2001) *Life Beyond the Classroom: Transition Strategies for Young People with Disabilities.*

APPENDIX 3

GETTING TO KNOW THE YOUTH: GATHERING INFORMATION

- Identify people in the youth's life, such as family members, friends, cultural associations, school personnel, social workers, current service providers and community members.
- Discuss where the young person spends his or her time.
- Identify things that others see as strengths that contribute to his or her positive characteristics.
- Identify things that people see as areas where growth is needed.
- Discuss the kinds of choices the individual makes.
- Identify preferences, including things that motivate the individual and create happiness, and non-preferences, including things that do not work for the individual, that create frustration and unhappiness.
- Discuss personal goals and dreams.
- Identify the most vital priorities to work on now (2-12 months) and in the future (1-5 years).
- Discuss opportunities, including things or people that can help the individual achieve his or her personal goals and dreams.
- Discuss obstacles or barriers, including things or people that are getting in the way of the individual achieving his or her personal goals and dreams.
- Identify strategies to help the individual overcome obstacles or barriers and achieve personal goals and dreams.

Adapted from Wehman, (2001) Life Beyond the Classroom: Transition Strategies for Young People with Disabilities.

SAMPLE TRANSITION PLANS

Appendix 4 includes two sample Transition Plans and a Transition Plan template. They may be used as a guide for the youth and his or her transition planning team as they create their own plans.

SAMPLE TRANSITION PLAN 1: Alex

Date: December 17, 2004
Name: Alex
Birth Date: June 5, 1987
School: Haliburton High

Profile

Alex is a 17-year-old student diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and a mild intellectual disability. He is the oldest of three children and lives with his single mother. Alex takes medication for anxiety.

Alex will have a School Leaving Certificate when he completes his last year of school (age 19). He is in a School to Work program for students between the ages of 16 to 19.

Alex receives Autism Funding through the Ministry of Children and Family Development. He currently uses this funding to support his participation in social recreation programs in the community. This funding is not available after his 19th birthday.

Strengths

Alex's strengths include computer skills and sorting materials. He has a keen eye for detail and is gentle with animals.

Team Members

Alex	student
Judy	mother
Charles	transition coordinator and special education teacher, School to Work program
George	School to Work assistant
Michael	support worker for after school program (family is using Autism Funding for this)
Mary	Community Living Services (CLS) social worker

Alex's Vision

Alex and his family would like a supported employment position in his neighbourhood. His family sees Alex living at home for the immediate future and then possibly living with another young adult with special needs in a supported placement.

PART 1: ALEX'S EMPLOYMENT PLAN

Employment Goal

Short term: Alex will participate in a variety of supported work placements over the next two years.

Long term: Alex will work full-time with support.

Skills and Abilities

Currently, Alex's interests lie in using computer programs, counting money, using vending machines, organizing basic materials (sorting, distributing) and grooming and walking small dogs. He also participates in a number of Life Skills Programs at school (basic literacy and numeracy and recreation and leisure programs). This term Alex has worked at the SPCA and at his local grocery store stocking shelves.

Tasks To Be Completed To Achieve Alex's Employment Goal

1. Alex will continue in the School to Work program for his remaining two years of high school.
   Until June 2007.

2. Alex will explore other work experiences based on his interests and strengths.
   By January 2005.

3. Alex will identify a preferred job site for his entry into supported employment.
   By January 2007.

4. The CLS social worker will assist Alex and his mother where needed to identify adult services and programs available through the Ministry of Human Resources, including financial assistance, transportation, employment planning and support.
   By December 2006.

Person(s) Responsible For Implementation

Transition coordinator and special education teacher from the School to Work program.

PART 2: ALEX'S INDEPENDENT LIVING PLAN

Independent Living Goal

Short Term: Alex will continue to live at home with his mother until the transition to supported employment is complete and successful.

Long Term: Alex will live with a roommate in a community-housing co-op with supports.

Skills and Abilities

Alex requires assistance with some daily living activities and he needs reminders to take his medications.

Tasks To Be Completed To Achieve Alex's Independent Living Goal

1. Alex and his mother will use some of the Autism Funding to hire a self-care professional, such as an occupational therapist, to assist Alex in learning self-care, medication management and household safety skills.
   By February 2006.
2. The CLS social worker, Alex and his mother will meet to explore options and possible adult services and programs.
   By January 2005.
3. The CLS social worker, Alex and his mother will discuss possible adult programs and services available through the local health authority, including In-home and Community-based Services.
   By March 2007, three months before Alex's 19th birthday.
4. Alex and his mother will apply for an apartment in a co-op housing unit.
   By December 2007.

Person(s) Responsible For Implementation

Transition coordinator and the CLS social worker.

Note: Alex's Transition Plan could also include goals for vocational training, financial needs, transportation, social relationships, etc.

SAMPLE TRANSITION PLAN 2: Sandeep

Date: January 2005
Name: Sandeep
Grade: 11
Age: 16

Profile

Sandeep is a 16-year-old high school student with a diagnosis of cerebral palsy. A cognitive assessment in grade nine, part of the Ministry of Education's requirements for adjudication, revealed Sandeep has average intellectual ability and a learning disability. She requires adaptations for all subjects and uses a voice output device and a laptop computer with Co:Writer. She also uses a power chair for mobility.

Strengths

Sandeep's strengths include being a fast learner and a strong communicator.

Team Members

Sandeep	student
Ranjit	mother
Paul	transition coordinator – special education teacher

Sandeep's Vision

Sandeep is interested in journalism and writing for periodicals and her favourite magazines. She wants to take a journalism program at a university, but she is concerned that her marks are not good enough for admission. Consequently, she will apply for entry to the community college and take first year English and writing courses before transitioning to university.

Current School Program

Sandeep is working towards a Dogwood Diploma (British Columbia Certificate of Graduation), however she is taking a reduced course load due to fatigue. She will remain in school for a year following her 18th birthday to complete her course credits.

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SANDEEP'S POST-SECONDARY PLAN

Post-Secondary Goals

Short term: Sandeep will successfully complete high school.

Long term: Sandeep will attend community college and successfully complete first year English and writing courses.

Tasks To Achieving Sandeep's Post-Secondary Goals

1. Sandeep will obtain journalism and writing experience through volunteering for the school newspaper during her last two years of high school.
2. The Transition Coordinator (Paul) will contact Special Education Technology BC regarding the transition to adult services for computer and communication equipment support.
   By September 2007.
3. Sandeep and her parents will contact the Ministry of Human Resources regarding programs and services for persons with disabilities (example: transportation, employment planning).
   By September 2007.
4. Sandeep will apply for admission to college.
   By March 2008.

Note: Sandeep may apply for university entrance after she has completed courses at a community college. Her plan could also include goals around housing and independent living.

TRANSITION PLAN TEMPLATE

Date: _____

Name: _____

Birth Date: _____

School: _____

Profile

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Strengths

_____

_____

_____

Team Members

_____

_____

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Student's Vision

_____

_____

_____

Goal

Short term: _____

_____

Long term: _____

_____

Skills and Abilities

_____

_____

_____

Tasks to Be Completed to Achieve Student's Goal (who, what and when)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

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FEEDBACK

The Ministry of Children and Family Development is interested in suggestions and comments regarding ***Transition Planning for Youth with Special Needs: A Community Support Guide***. Those of you who use this guide can best identify its strengths and weaknesses and so we would like to hear from you.

To offer suggestions and comments on how we can improve ***Transition Planning for Youth with Special Needs: A Community Support Guide***, please use the Transition Planning Community Support Guide Feedback postcard provided below. Or you can contact the Ministry directly by calling the Children and Youth with Special Needs Branch at (250) 952-6044 or by faxing your comments to (250) 356-0399.

For more copies of *Transition Planning for Youth with Special Needs: A Community Support Guide* visit MCFD's web site at www.gov.bc.ca/mcf or contact the Children and Youth with Special Needs Branch (contact information above).

Was the information in the *Community Support Guide* useful? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Were there gaps in the information provided? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please describe below

Write your comments and ideas for improving the *Community Support Guide* below.

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